



## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Greater Atlantic Region Permit Family of Forms

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of information collection, request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov](mailto:Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0202 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Cynthia Ferrio, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930, (978) 281-9180, [Cynthia.ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.ferrio@noaa.gov).

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### *I. Abstract*

This request is for revision of a current information collection. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Secretary of Commerce has the responsibility for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources. Much of this responsibility has been delegated to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Under this stewardship role, the Secretary was given certain regulatory authorities to ensure the most beneficial uses of these resources. One of the regulatory steps taken to carry out the conservation and management objectives is to collect information from users of the resources.

The Secretary has enacted rules to issue permits to individuals and organizations participating in federally controlled fisheries. Permits are necessary to: (1) Register fishermen, fishing vessels, fish dealers and processors; (2) list the characteristics of fishing vessels and/or dealer/processor operations; (3) exercise influence over compliance (*e.g.*, withhold issuance pending collection of unpaid penalties); (4) maintain contact lists for the dissemination of important information to the industry; (5) register participants to be considered for limited entry; and (6) provide a universe for data collection samples. Identification of fishery participants, their gear types, vessels, and expected activity levels is an effective and necessary tool in the enforcement of fishery regulations.

This collection is being revised to introduce a new online permitting system (FishOnline) to allow individuals and organizations to apply and renew their fishing vessel permits, operator permits, dealer permits, Letter of Authorization (LOA), and gillnet certificates.

This collection also includes the requirement for participants in certain fisheries to use onboard vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and to notify NMFS before fishing trips for the purpose of observer placement. Other permitting in this

collection includes the written request to participate in any of the various exemption programs offered in the Greater Atlantic region.

Exemption programs may allow a vessel to fish in an area that is limited to vessels of a particular size, using a certain gear type, or fishing for a particular species. This collection also contains paperwork required for vessel owners to request gillnet and lobster trap tags through the Greater Atlantic region permit office.

Lastly, vessel owners that own multiple vessels, but would like to request communication from NMFS be consolidated into one mailing (and not separate mailings for each vessel), may request the single letter vessel owner option to improve efficiency of their business practice.

## *II. Method of Collection*

*Vessel Permits:* All vessel permit applications, including permit applications and renewals for vessels, dealers, and vessel operators, as well as gillnet and lobster trap tag purchase, are required to be submitted using an online account (FishOnline).

*VMS Requirements:* Vessels with VMS requirements are required to declare their intent to fish (e.g., declare into the fishery) and submit daily catch reports using electronic VMS units on board the vessel. Other VMS actions may include trip start and end hails, pre-landing notifications, and days-at-sea (DAS) adjustments. VMS power down exemption requests are submitted by signed paper form.

*Observer Program Call-in Requirements:* Vessels issued certain permits such as Northeast multispecies, monkfish, scallop, and Atlantic herring permits are required to give advance notification to the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) before the start of a trip in order to receive a fisheries observer or a waiver. Vessels use an online pre-trip notification system, email, toll-free call-in number, or a local phone number to comply with this requirement.

*Exempted Fisheries Programs:* Vessels that would like to request participation in one or more of the Greater Atlantic region fisheries exemption programs must either submit a request electronically using their VMS unit, by declaring into an exempted fishery prior to the start of a trip, or by submitting a request to participate in the program(s) of interest using their FishOnline account.

*Vessel Owner Single Letter Option:* Vessel owners that own multiple vessels, but would like to receive only a single Greater Atlantic Fisheries Bulletin or small entity compliance guide instead of one for each vessel permit, must submit a written request to NMFS to participate in this program.

### *III. Data*

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0202.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular (revision of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Businesses and other for-profit organizations are primarily affected. Individuals or households, state, local or tribal governments, and the Federal Government are also affected.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 129,453.

*Estimated Time Per Response: Vessel Permits:* Vessel permit application: 40 minutes; vessel permit renewal forms: 20 minutes; initial dealer permit applications: 15 minutes; dealer permit renewal forms: 5 minutes; initial and renewal vessel operator permit applications: 30 minutes; online account creation (FishOnline Account Information Collection): 15 minutes; limited access vessel replacement applications: 1.5 hours; and applications for retention of limited access permit history: 1.5 hours. *VMS Requirements:* Installing a VMS unit: 1 hour; confirming VMS connectivity: 5 minutes; VMS certification form: 5 minutes; VMS installation for Canadian herring transport vessels: 1 hour and 20 minutes; email to declare their entrance and departure from U.S. waters: 15 minutes; automatic polling of vessel position using the VMS

unit: 0 minutes; area and DAS declarations: 5 minutes; declaration of days-out of the gillnet fishery for monkfish and NE multispecies vessels: 5 minutes; Good Samaritan DAS credit request: 30 minutes; entangled whale DAS credit request: 30 minutes; DAS credit for a canceled trip due to unforeseen circumstances, but have not yet begun fishing: 5 minutes to request via the VMS unit and 10 minutes to request via the paper form; VMS catch reports: 5 minutes; VMS power down exemption: 30 minutes. *Observer Program Call-in Requirements:* Requests for observer coverage are estimated to require either 2 or 10 minutes per request, depending on the program for which observers are requested. *Exempted Fisheries Programs:* Letter of Authorization (LOA) to participate in any of the exemption programs: 5 minutes; Charter/Party Exemption Certificate for GOM Closed Areas: 5 minutes; limited access sea scallop vessels state waters DAS exemption program or state waters gear exemption program: 2 minutes; withdraw from either state waters exemption program prior to the end of the 7-day designated exemption period requirement: 2 minutes; request for change in permit category designation: 5 minutes; request for transit to another port by a vessel required to remain within the GOM cod trip limit: 2 minutes; gillnet category designation, including initial requests for gillnet tags: 10 minutes; requests for additional tags: 2 minutes; notification of lost tags and requests for replacement tag numbers: 2 minutes; attachment of gillnet tags: 1 minute; initial lobster area designations: 5 minutes; requests for additional tags: 2 minutes; and notification of lost tags: 3 minutes; requests for state quota transfers in the bluefish, summer flounder and scup fisheries: 1 hour; GOM cod trip limit exemption: 5 minutes; vessel owner single letter option: 5 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 18,737.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$2,302,677 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.

*Legal Authority:* Title 50, Chapter VI, Part 648: FISHERIES OF THE  
NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

*IV. Request for Comments*

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer,*

*Office of the Chief Information Officer,*

*Commerce Department.*

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